Air Pouch
PRIORITY

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
(Security Classification)

DO NOT TYPE IN THIS SPACE

611.61 241/9-860

FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

FROM : Amembassy BRUSSELS

235
DESP. NO.

TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

September 8, 1960
DATE

REF :

ID-4 SCA-3

For Dept. Use Only	ACTION EUR-5	DEPT. INFO Gmic-2 FE-7 INR-7 M/MR-1 I&O-1 P-3
	REC'D 9-13	OTHER CIA-15 USIA-10 OCB-2 ARMY-4 NAVY-3 AIR-3 OCB-2 NSC-2

SUBJECT: Korean War Prisoners Reported in Soviet Union.

On Labor Day, September 5, the Embassy Duty Officer, James W. White, met with a "walk-in" Polish refugee, Richard ROMANOWSKI. Romanowski said that he was released on May 1, 1960, after seven and one-half years detention, from Soviet prison Camp No. 307 near Bulun, supposedly about 50 kilometers from Yakutsk. He stated that he later escaped from Poland via East and West Germany and entered Belgium on August 9, 1960. He is now a political refugee in Belgium and he is attempting to emigrate to Australia.

Romanowski said that he became acquainted in the Soviet camp with two American Army prisoners who were captured in Korea in 1951: Ted WATSON, an infantry lieutenant, and Fred ROSBIKI, a commando or paratrooper sergeant. They had asked him to report their presence to the American Embassy in Warsaw, but Romanowski indicated he was afraid to do so. Consequently, he was taking this opportunity to report the facts to the American authorities. However, he asked that his name be kept confidential as its revelation might jeopardize the safety of his relatives in Poland.

A full memorandum of conversation is enclosed. The Office of the Army Attaché is separately reporting on this matter through military channels, [redacted] attempting to check further on Romanowski's story and bona fides.

For the Ambassador:

Stanley M. Cleveland
First Secretary of Embassy

Enclosure:

Memorandum of conversation.

This copy has been designated the RECORD COPY. It must be returned to EE/R for filing.

Copies sent to: Amembassies WARSAW, MOSCOW, SEOUL, BONN.

RAMcKinnon:ajc
REPORTER

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.6
NND 966003
By ____ Date 8/5/96

INFORMATION COPY
Retain in divisional files or destroy in accordance with security regulations.

FILED
JUL 17 2 [illegible] PM '61

611.61 241/9-860 CS

611.61241/9-860

CLASSIFIED FILE

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
(Classification)

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

Participants: Richard ROMANOWSKI, Polish Refugee
James W. White, Embassy Duty Officer

Place: American Embassy, Brussels

Date: September 5, 1960

Subject: American Military Personnel in Soviet Concentration Camp.

Background: Between 1600 and 1700 on September 5, the Marine Guard called Mr. White, Embassy duty officer, to inform him that a Polish refugee had telephoned the Embassy and asked to speak with the "consul" in order to give him information on Americans held in a Soviet camp. The Marine Guard suggested that the refugee come to the Embassy. When White arrived at the chancery, the refugee, Romanowski, was already there. Before interviewing him, White telephoned Mr. Cleveland of the Political Section to ask if there were any special instructions concerning a case like this. Mr. Cleveland suggested that White interview Romanowski, obtaining as much information as possible, particularly as to where he might be reached in the future.

Personal Data: Romanowski freely gave data concerning his background. He repeatedly stressed, however, that his name should be kept confidential and should in no way be associated with the American Embassy. His relatives in Poland might be jeopardized.

Name:	Romanowski, Richard
Born:	January 1, 1928, Krakow, Poland
Marital Status:	Widower of WOJAKOWSKA, M.
Children:	One daughter, in Poland
Appearance:	Roughly 5'6" or 5'7" Curly hair, worn long, slightly receding Blue eyes Bad teeth Slight build
Languages:	Polish, Russian, German, French, and English. (NOTE: White conversed with Romanowski principally in French, secondarily in English and Russian. Romanowski's French is fair, English poor, and Russian fluent. He stated that he knew German well.)
Habits:	Smokes a pipe, cigarettes.

Present Residence: A room in a private house at the following address: Rue Joseph Jaspar No. 10, Liège, Belgium. He is living off public aid given at the rate of BF 50 per day, an amount which he says is insufficient for him to pay room rent and eat properly. He has a temporary Belgian identity card which does not permit him to work.

Romanowski stated that he was a prisoner for seven and one-half years at Camp No. 307 near Bulun, which he thought was about 30 kilometers from Yakutsk. The camp contained 16,000 political-type prisoners. He was amnestied and released on May 1, 1960, after which he was returned to Poland.

Romanowski and a friend together attempted the escape from Poland, the latter being shot in the attempt. Romanowski successfully made his way into East Germany south of Stettin, going across the Baltic coast to Lubeck. From there he went to Hamburg, Cologne, and entered Belgium on August 9, 1960.

At present, he is trying to arrange emigration to Australia.

Information on American Prisoners: Romanowski states that the two Americans whose names are given below were captured in Korea in 1951. These men, who think that their families believe them dead, asked Romanowski to inform the Embassy in Poland that they were prisoners in the USSR. (Romanowski said that he feared to go to the Embassy in Warsaw because all Poles visiting it are checked.) The information on the Americans is as follows:

1. WATSON, Ted - Infantry lieutenant; 38 years old (birthday April 12 or 13); not married; has mother, father, and two sisters; comes from Buffalo (presumably New York, but Romanowski was not sure).

2. ROSBIKI, Fred - Sergeant; a commando or paratrooper; grandparents were Polish emigres; father is dead, has two sisters; from Chicago, Liberty Street.

The health of both men is poor as a result of working in the phosphorous mine associated with the camp. (Romanowski said the chemical attacks the head and liver. He showed me how his own head is constantly scaling.)

Comment: On appearances, Romanowski seemed sincere. When leaving, he indicated that he did not have sufficient funds to return to Liege. White gave him BF 100 which he appeared to accept reluctantly. He more readily accepted some American cigarettes and pipe tobacco. It was at this point that he explained that he was living off BF 50 per day, 30 of which goes for room rent, leaving him only 20 for daily food. It would not seem that he came to the Embassy for help, but it is not impossible that he might request some assistance later on.

(one Belgian franc equals $.02 US.)